



The Roleplay project

experiential pedagogy for promoting gender equality in
education and career choices

Roleplay-logo and illustration by Karin Niemi

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The Roleplay project — from recognizing gender segregation to practical solutions

Why? Gender segregation in education and working life remains strong in Finland

What? Gender awareness training for teaching and counselling professionals and tools to identify and mitigate gender segregation

How? Experiential learning and pedagogy for holistic personal growth and learning

Time: 1.3.2020–28.2.2022

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Leverage from
the EU
2014–2020



Gender segregation = segregation of jobs, work tasks and educational or professional fields by gender

In Finland gender inequalities are most pronounced in the domain of knowledge in which Finland ranks 11th (61.9 points) (EIGE 2021)

- The most segregated occupations in Finland: over 90% of the employees in the social and health services (nurse, child-care and home services/home care) are women and over 90% of drivers, construction workers and mechanical fitters/repairers are men
- In 2017 only 9% of all Finnish employees worked in an equally divided profession (at least 40% representation of both genders)
- The percentage of tertiary students studying education, health and welfare, humanities and arts: Finland: women 51%, men 18% and EU: women 43%, men 21%

References: Suomen virallinen tilasto (SVT) 2019. 9. 2. Ammatillinen eriytyminen palkansaajilla ja yrittäjillä vuosina 2017 ja 2012. Helsinki: Tilastokeskus. Suomen virallinen tilasto (SVT). 2018. Vuoden 2016 työllisten, työllisten naisten ja työllisten miesten kymmenen yleisintä ammattiryhmää verrattuna vuoteen 2011. Helsinki: Tilastokeskus. EIGE. Gender Equality Index 2021. Source: Eurostat, Education statistics, 2019. 2018. ED5 - Short-cycle tertiary education N/A. educ_enr15, educ_uoe_enrt03.

A coaching program for education and guidance professionals working with young people was developed and piloted

"The purpose of the coaching programme is to develop skills in gender-aware guidance and teaching as well as experiential pedagogy. The coaching programme consists of coaching days and concrete development tasks carried out in one's own work. In the first development task, the participants observe the situation of gender segregation and equality in their own work environment. In the second development task, a tool, method or operating model that mitigates gender segregation is applied in one's own work. The participants in the coaching programme will acquire the ability to understand the causes and consequences of gender segregation in education and working life. The participants will know how to reduce segregation and how to use different methods to break down gender segregation. The participants will acquire skills to support young people in their own educational choices and to promote young people's empowerment through experiential pedagogy and experiential learning. The participants will know how to promote equality and a gender-aware culture in their own work and work community."

Reference: Anttila, M. & Elme, E. (eds.) 2022. Yli stereotyyppioista - keinoja sukupuolittuneiden alavalintojen purkamiseen. LAB-ammattikorkeakoulun julkaisusarja, osa 38, 51-52. Translated from the original Finnish citation. Available at: <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-827-397-7>



Why experiential pedagogy for gender segregation training?

“An essential part of Finnish experiential pedagogical activities are activities in nature, where you can act without existing roles, assumptions or expectations — experiences of oneself gained through new challenges and experiences strengthen an individual's ability to make their own educational and career choices. In the Roleplay project, experiential pedagogical processes and experiential learning were used as a means to support the participants to encounter and change assumptions and beliefs related to gender segregation and to enable them to adopt new ways of thinking and acting.”

Reference: Anttila, M. & Elme, E. (eds.) 2022. Yli stereotyyppioista - keinoja sukupuolittuneiden alavalintojen purkamiseen. LAB-ammattikorkeakoulun julkaisusarja, osa 38, 8-9. Translated from the original Finnish citation. Available at: <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-827-397-7>



With experiential pedagogy as a gender-aware counsellor – training programme



TRAINING PART	CONTENT
Pre-assignment	-setting one's own learning goals
Starting day Time: 8 h	-content of the training programme -what is segregation? -getting to know each other with a segregation theme -stereotypes, norms and experiential pedagogy -guidance for first development task -how to prepare for the outdoor period
First development task — independent work	-observing the situation of gender segregation and equality in one's work environment
Optional: webinar on experiential pedagogy Time: 1.5 h	-basics, values and ideology of experiential pedagogy
Optional: webinar on gender segregation Time: 1.5 h	-reasons behind segregation and the impact of segregation on educational and career choices
First outdoor period Carried out from one camp site to another on foot, paddle or other means Time: 3 days	-discussion on the first development task -experience of experiential pedagogy -examples of how to break down gender segregation -instructions for the second development task
Second development task — independent work	-applying or developing a tool, method or operating model that mitigates gender segregation in one's own work
Second outdoor period Implemented as a camp in nature Time: 3 days	-second development tasks are guided for other participants and evaluated together -practice combining experiential pedagogy and segregation -experience planned by the participants -reflection on one's own learning goals

Training and practical tools to reduce gender segregation

Professionals working with young people, such as counsellors, teachers and educators, still play an important role in adolescents' educational choices (TAT 2020). The issue is that it can be difficult to recognize the meaning of gender on one's occupational choice (Lahtinen et al. 2019), thus, there is a need for different practical exercises and methods to address the phenomenon with young people. Over 20 tools, referring to methods, practices and/or policies, to reduce gender segregation were piloted, described and disseminated to youth education and guidance professionals and networks in the field during the Roleplay project. The tools were developed collaboratively by the project's personnel and participants of the project (professionals working with young people).

References: [TAT. 2020. Kun koulu loppuu – Nuorten tulevaisuusraportti 2020. Talous ja Nuoret TAT ry. ; Lahtinen \(ed.\) 2019. "Mikä ois mun juttu" – nuorten koulutusvalinnat sosialisaatio-maisemien kehyksissä: Purkutalkoot-hankkeen loppuraportti. Helsinki: Valtioneuvosto.](#)



Method example

A work of natural art about one's own life course in a gender-aware way

Subject: life course, identity, gender

Objective: to raise awareness of the meaning of gender in one's life course and career choice

Time: 1–1.5 h depending on the number of participants

Materials and tools: nature, smart phone and online meeting platform if carried out remotely

Ask participants to reflect on their own life course, identity, and any career choices they have already made from a gender perspective. How gender is affected or reflected:

- What games did you engage in when a child? With whom did you spend your time?
- What kinds of roles there were in your childhood home? Who was cleaning, who fixed the car etc.?
- What are/were your hobbies?
- Why and how did you choose your current occupation?
- What skills and knowledge are your strengths, and which aren't?

The reflection is described in a work of natural art that can be constructed using different natural materials or the landscape (taking everyone's rights into account). The work of natural art is built independently, and it is a good idea to set aside 15–30 minutes for it. When the works are ready, a gallery walk is carried out, i.e. everyone in turn presents and tells as much as they want about their own work of art. The exercise can also be done remotely, in which case the interaction is carried out via Zoom or Teams, for example, and everyone in turn shares a video or image of their artwork.

Reference: Anttila, M. & Elme, E. (eds.) 2022. Yli stereotyyppiöistä - keinoja sukupuolittuneiden alavalintojen purkamiseen. LAB-ammattikorkeakoulun julkaisusarja, osa 38, 25. Translated from the original Finnish citation. Available at: <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-827-397-7>

Method example

Gender in culture

Subject: gender roles and norms

Objective: to notice and observe gender norms, roles and stereotypes in our culture

Time: 30–45 min (independent information retrieval and discussion together)

Materials and tools: computer, smart phone, tablet etc. for information searching

The task begins with an independent search for information. The participants seek a self-speaking example of art or culture that addresses gender segregation, norms, roles, or stereotypes. For example, a music video or song, a poem, an advertisement, a theatre or dance performance, a work of art, a picture, or a book. After an independent search for information, the task is discussed together so that everyone talks about the example they found: which example did you find? Why did it speak to you? How is gender treated in the example? Alternatively, the information retrieval task can be combined with a writing task in which the task is reflected on in the writing. It is a good idea for participants to have a basic understanding of gender segregation already in place, making it easier to find examples.

Reference: Anttila, M. & Elme, E. (eds.) 2022. Yli stereotyyppioista - keinoja sukupuolittuneiden alavalintojen purkamiseen. LAB-ammattikorkeakoulun julkaisusarja, osa 38, 21. Translated from the original Finnish citation. Available at: <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-827-397-7>

Method example

Segregation orienteering outdoors

Subject: gender segregation, gender stereotypes and norms

Objectives: to raise awareness of gender segregation on the move and consider the factors influencing segregation through constructive learning

Time: 1–1.5 h

Materials and tools: <https://aoe.fi/#/materiaali/1755> (Anttila & Nöjd 2021b, in Finnish)

Before the exercise, print out the question and answer forms. Place the question forms in the vicinity so that there is enough space between them. Divide participants into small groups of 2–4 people. Groups should search for the question forms either visually, using a map, or using the app. The groups complete the questions in the given time in the order they want. Finally, review the answers with the participants and discuss the thoughts raised by the exercise. You can find more detailed instructions on the implementation in the link under the tools and materials section (in Finnish). The exercise is suitable for both young people and adults, adapting the questions to the target group. Here are some examples of questions:

- What was Finland's ranking on the Gender Equality Index 2020 regarding knowledge segregation? Which country was on the top and in which country was the segregation of knowledge the greatest?
- There are stories of people who have made career choices which are atypical for their gender. Some of them are career changers. Briefly write the content of the story (who and in what field) down here and write two things that you particularly remembered about the stories.
- How is gender norm defined? Write down two (2) examples of how gender norms impact our everyday life?
- Draw a picture of what a software designer looks like according to your opinion. Then look for at least two stories about a person working as a software designer. Did your imagination correspond to reality?
- Pay path: combine different occupations to the average monthly salary in that field.
- Ad: First, choose a profession, and, if necessary, find out about it by searching the Internet. Then design an advertisement for the profession that will make the field attractive for all genders and make all genders feel welcome to the field. For example, highlight the different aspects of the profession and the skills needed in the profession, and pay attention to the illustration and the language you use. In the implementation of the advertisement, you can utilize the materials at the checkpoint, the gifts of nature (taking into account everyone's rights) and, for example, the phone.

Reference: Anttila, M. & Elme, E. (eds.) 2022. Yli stereotyyppiä - keinoja sukupuolittuneiden alavalintojen purkamiseen. LAB-ammattikorkeakoulun julkaisusarja, osa 38, 24. Translated from the original Finnish citation. Available at: <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-827-397-7>

Want to know more? 1/2

Publications of the Roleplay project in English:

Anttila, M. & Nöjd, T. 2021. Experiential tools for enhancing the impact of gender segregation training. In: Peltonen, K. & Hartikainen, A. (eds.). LAB Health Annual Review 2021. Lahti: LAB University of Applied Sciences. The Publication Series of LAB University of Applied Sciences, part 30. 104–114. LAB Health Annual Review 2021. Available at: <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-827-381-6>

Anttila, M., Elme, E. & Nöjd, T. 2020. The Roleplay project – experiential pedagogy for promoting gender equality in education and career choices. LAB Health Annual Review 2020. In: Hartikainen, A. & Peltonen, K. (eds.). LAB Health Annual Review 2020. Lahti: LAB University of Applied Sciences. The Publication Series of LAB University of Applied Sciences, part 5. 88–96. Available at: <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-827-333-5>

Nöjd, T. & Anttila, M. 2021. Gender segregation in education and working life. Library of Open Educational Resources. Available at: <https://aoe.fi/#/materiaali/1836>

Information about gender equality in Finland:

Finnish institute for health and welfare. Gender Equality. Centre for Gender Equality Information. Available at: <https://thl.fi/en/web/gender-equality>

Statistics Finland 2021. Gender Equality in Finland 2021. Available at: https://www.stat.fi/tup/julkaisut/tiedostot/julkaisuluettelo/yyti_gef_202100_2021_23461_net.pdf

EIGE. European Institute for Gender Equality. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/>

Want to know more? 2/2

Methods and practical tools for enhancing gender equality:

Boys in Care -project. 2019. Boys in Care Toolkit. Available at: https://www.boys-in-care.eu/fileadmin/BIC/General/BIC_Toolkit_English.pdf

Fit for Gender Mainstreaming -project. 2008. Gender Toolbox. Heinrich Boell Foundation. Available at: <http://www.fit-for-gender.org/toolbox/toolboxEN/toolrotEN.htm>

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Forum för levande historia & RFSL Ungdom. 2009. BREAK THE NORM. Methods for studying norms in general and the heteronorm in particular. Swepografiska. Available at: <https://www.includegender.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/BreakTheNorm.pdf>

Netzwerk Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung NRW 2021. Gender Curricula - Proposals of integrating the contents of (subject-specific) women's and gender studies into degree courses. Available at: <http://www.gender-curricula.com/en/gender-curricula>

UNESCO. 2015. A Guide for gender equality in teacher education policy and practices. Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000231646>

STING project 2016. STEM Teacher Training Innovation for Gender Balance TOOLKIT. Write a Letter to Yourself. Available at: https://stingeuproject.files.wordpress.com/2016/12/toolkit_en_2017_05_09.pdf